Volumes have been written about the Jewishness of Spinoza, and it has been denied as vigorously as it has been affirmed. But all would agree that his peculiar flavour owes at least something to his origin.' By "origin" is not meant some mysterious and indefinable, but no less actual, quality of the blood which made Spinoza from his very first embryo stage, what is called a monist • but only that the cultural tradition from which Spinoza sprang and in which he spent his early and impressionable years, a tradition rooted as it was in an austere mono-theism, was such as to suggest a monistic key to the riddles of existence. Monism is, of course, not monotheism and the religion of the Synagogue which Spinoza left is not the five books of the *Ethics* which Spinoza bequeathed as a new Pentateuch to mankind. But if the Synagogue taught anything it was the unity of God, and Spinoza's philosophy is a hymn to the unity of God's work or nature. The characteristic dogmas of Judaism and Spinozism are thus closely akin. Whatever Spinoza derived from other sources is subordinated to this ulti-mate vision, and the unitary character of the resulting system, crushing in its simplicity, is only another sign of its primary inspiration.

The extent and profundity of Spinoza's influence on modern thought is a matter on which two opinions cannot be held. He is one of the great thinkers of the world. It is common to mention him with Plato and like Plato he has survived even his

admirers Indeed
he is most like Plato in that he is a fruitful
"source of
ideas even for those who profess themselves
his opponents
Personal intercourse with Leibniz at the very
close of his
life gave the determining influence to the
latter's thought,
which was destined to dominate the
eighteenth century'
No book on Spinoza fails to teU of his
position in the
history of the formation of the German mind
in its days